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Friday, August 15, 2008

ARIZONA SEES A DECREASE IN METH LABS, RELATED CRIMES

Report Released by Governor's Meth Task Force

PHOENIX – A report released this week by Governor Napolitano's Methamphetamine Task Force shows a dramatic reduction in the number of clandestine methamphetamine labs in Arizona. Methamphetamine lab incidents in Arizona have decreased from 254 in 2002 to only eight in 2007.

The reduction of methamphetamine labs is credited to regulatory efforts to control retail-level sales of pseudoephedrine, which can be found in many over-the-counter cold medicines. These regulatory efforts have impacted the small-scale laboratories that purchase products containing pseudoephedrine locally. With the decrease in seizures came a decline in methamphetamine-related consequences.

"In the two years since the Meth Task Force was created, real and measurable progress has been made," said Governor Napolitano. "In addition, an infrastructure to better monitor the purchases of products containing pseudoephedrine has been created that will continue to respond to this specific drug threat."

The Meth Task Force was created in August 2006 and in May 2007 the group announced an action plan containing 10 priority recommendations. The report released provides an update on the progress that has been made toward those recommendations.

In addition to the decrease in the number of meth labs, accomplishments include:

- **Arizona's selection as one of only eight states to participate in the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) Methamphetamine Initiative.** This will provide Arizona with the assistance and expertise of national substance abuse professionals who will help Arizona establish and enhance additional problem-solving strategies to combat the use and distribution of meth.
- **The creation of the Arizona Substance Abuse Partnership (ASAP).** ASAP is comprised of representatives from state government entities, federal entities and community organizations and serves as the single statewide council on substance abuse prevention, enforcement and treatment.

- **The State of Arizona was awarded a three-year grant of approximately \$8.3 million by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Center for Substance Abuse Treatment.** The goals of the grant are to expand capacity, support client choice, and increase the array of faith-based and community based providers for clinical treatment and recovery support services. The grant will fund a cost-effective treatment and recovery support services voucher system for individuals with methamphetamine-related substance use disorders who are involved in one of the seven participating county-based adult drug courts and two tribal communities.

“As the Task Force works to implement our original recommendations, we also continue to modify, revise and change them as we learn what works and what does not,” said Barbara La Wall, Pima County Attorney and Meth Task Force Chair. “There is much more to be accomplished and we will continue to be relentless in our pursuit to make a significant impact in the enforcement, prevention and treatment of the meth problem in Arizona.”

A copy of the Arizona Methamphetamine Task Force Progress Report can be found at <http://gocyf.az.gov/SAP/documents/MTF/2008MTFProgressReport.pdf>.

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